

THE

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ISPATCH
APRIL 2016

THE MAGAZINE OF THE
TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT

SEEKING SHELTER

GUARDSMEN ESTABLISH
SAFE SPACES FOR TEXAS
FLOOD VICTIMS

NEW BEGINNINGS FOR TEXAS YOUTH





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THE DISPATCH

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The Cover



Texas National Guard Paratroopers from the 1st Battalion (Airborne) 143rd Infantry Regiment and Charlie Troop (LRS) 3rd Squadron, 124th Cavalry Regiment conduct airborne operations at Fort Hood's Rapido Drop Zone on April 17, 2015.
(U.S. Army National Guard photo by Maj. Randall Stillinger)



Sgt. Easley, 2nd Battalion, 8th Regiment, Texas State Guard (TXSG) checks on displaced pets belonging to evacuated personnel, at the shelter in Beaumont, Texas, March 18, 2016. "We're all Texans helping each other," said Easley. The TXSG mobilized, in support of civil authorities, to assist evacuated flood victims in the southeastern region of the state, 14-21 March 2016. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Capt. Maria Mengrone)



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Greg Abbott



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The Texas Military Department Public Affairs Office would like to thank all the contributing writers and photographers who generously share their work with us. Without the hard work and dedication of Soldiers, Airmen and civilians, we would not be able to tell YOUR TMD story.

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TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT COUNSELING SERVICES



**A NO COST BENEFIT PROVIDED BY THE PEOPLE OF TEXAS
TO SUPPORT OUR SERVICE MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES**

What type of services do our counselors provide?

Our counselors will meet with Service Members and/or their Family Members experiencing individual stress, anxiety, depression, anger, grief, family problems, relationship problems and many other issues that may be presented.

Is it confidential?

Yes! Meeting with our counselors is confidential and will not be reported to your command or anyone else, with the exception of reporting abuse of a child, elderly, or disabled person (TX State Law) and/or danger to self or others (Duty to Warn).

What do our counselors do?

Meet with Service Members and their Family Members to discover their individual needs.

Develop support plans for individuals and/or their family.

Respond to critical incidents and provide post-vention care.

Coordinate with TMD unit leadership to support behavioral health awareness and wellness promotion plans.

Conduct behavioral health training for TMD.

Provide support through the 24/7 Counseling Line.

Coordinate with TMD Family Support Services (FSS) programs to offer holistic care to all clients.

Assist and execute plans for behavioral health assistance to TMD Soldiers and employees during disaster response missions.

How much will it cost me?

NOTHING!! Our services are free of charge to Service Members and their Families.

Counseling Line: 512-782-5069



TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT STRATEGY

VISION:

AMERICA'S PREMIER STATE MILITARY COMPRISED OF MISSION-READY PROFESSIONALS FULLY ENGAGED WITH OUR COMMUNITIES, AND RELEVANT THROUGH THE 21ST CENTURY.

MISSION:

PROVIDE THE GOVERNOR AND PRESIDENT WITH READY FORCES IN SUPPORT OF STATE & FEDERAL AUTHORITIES AT HOME AND ABROAD.

PEOPLE FIRST: *Invest In Our Human Capital*

*Diverse & Engaged Force Sustained Through Effective Retention & Recruiting
Trained Ethical Professionals*

Resilient Professionals & Families, Supported By Robust Services

Clearly Communicated Opportunities For Professional & Personal Development

RELEVANT & READY: *Provide Right Force At The Right Time*

Force Structure Optimized For Federal & State Missions

Modern Training Areas & Facilities That Support Our Mission

Effective Resource Management & Protection

Enhanced Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental & Multinational Capabilities

COMMUNICATE & PARTNER: *Deliver Our Message & Build Lasting Relationships*

Effective Communication Assets & Channels

Partnered & Informed Communities

Engaged & Educated Government Partners

Strong Department of Defense Relationships



DUTY, HONOR, TEXAS

Commentary by Maj. Gen. John F. Nichols The Adjutant General of Texas

As the adjutant general of Texas and the commander of the Texas Military, I would like each of you to know that it is an honor to serve with such an extraordinary group of soldiers, airmen, civilians and family members. From overseas deployments, emergency operations supporting our local and state partners, training and daily operations, this past year was busy, but each of you accepted the challenge and answered the call. Despite numerous obstacles, you persevered and continue to make the Texas Guard a ready and relevant force, supporting the citizens of Texas and the nation both at home and abroad.

You are the most valuable resource we have. As we look to the future, I challenge each of you to train, coach and mentor the next generation of leaders so that we as an organization will continue to grow and sustain a force capable of serving the state and nation.

There are three values that truly describe the caliber of the men and women in the Texas Military Department and the standard we hold ourselves up to – Duty, Honor and Texas.

DUTY – The definition of this value is to bear true faith and allegiance to the state and nation. Looking at our recent history, the dedication our service members give to our mission is the example.

In the summer of 2014, when I asked for 1,000 volunteers to support operations along the border for an undetermined amount of time, we had several thousand volunteers within days.



**“You are
the most
valuable
resource
we have”**

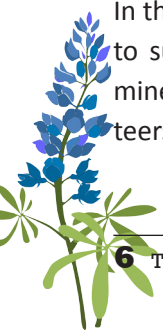
- Maj. Gen. John F. Nichols -
The Adjutant General of Texas

In 2015 alone, guardsmen from the Texas Army National Guard, Texas Air National Guard and Texas State Guard responded to severe flooding across the state, numerous wildfires in Central Texas and winter storms in North Texas. Your efforts responding during state emergencies were responsible for saving hundreds of Texans in need.

On top of all of this, you continue to train side-by-side with our local, state and federal partners to ensure that we remain a ready force, able to answer the call of the governor or the president.

HONOR – Hold the public trust in the highest regard; exceed standards and expectations; act with understanding, innovation, resourcefulness, flexibility and urgency; do all you can, where you are with what you have and always place the welfare of those you lead first.

It is humbling to see how so many of you exemplify honor. You have earned the trust of our partner agencies and allies around the world.





This past year the Texas State Guard was asked to work in the State Operations Center to support planners during emergency response. To date, they continue to receive requests from places like the Brooks County Sheriff's Department to help with search and rescue operations.

The Texas Army and Air National Guards have trained alongside our allied forces in Chile and the Czech Republic for years, building relationships and learning from each other. Just this past year, the Michigan Air National Guard asked our airmen to train with them in Latvia, where they flew the first MQ-1 Predator in Latvian airspace and forged a new relationship with another allied military. Your dedication to duty Your willingness to go above and beyond have earned the trust of people from all over the world.

TEXAS – Embrace the courageous spirit of our people, history and culture.

Our history is full of brave men and women who sacrificed themselves for their state and nation - from those who fought at the Alamo, to infamous battles of the 36th Infantry Division during World War II, to the many unsung heroes from the Korean and Vietnam wars.

Today our ranks are full of veterans who have served with courage and bravery on the battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq; and who continue to serve in combat and peacekeeping missions all over the world, as well as, here at home.

In 2015, our guardsmen deployed to 12 different countries to support both combat and peacekeeping operations in the Middle East, North Africa and Asia. Additionally, here at home, you continue to put yourselves in harm's way to serve Texans in need.

I want to thank all of you for your service and dedication to Texas. Thank you to your families for their support as you serve the state and nation. Thank you to our civilian employees for supporting our mission. Thank you to our service members who make the Texas Guard possible.

As we look to the future, continue to exceed the standard and improve our force by demanding a professional and ethical work environment, mentoring your subordinates to be better than yourself, taking care of each other and always placing the mission and the welfare of those you lead first. - **FROM THE TOP**

FROM THE TOP



FROM FLOODS TO FIRES, TEXAS GUARDSMEN ARE READY TO SERVE.

Commentary by Brig. Gen. Patrick Hamilton

AUSTIN, Texas – Last month, heavy rainfalls along our Texas-Louisiana border caused severe flooding in the southeastern part of the state. Texas Army guardsmen worked alongside emergency first responders, rescuing and evacuating more than 400 people. At the same time Texas State guardsmen were embedded with the American Red Cross, conducted mass shelter operations and helped provide a safe place for evacuated personnel to go.

As quickly as the flooding appears, our guardsmen were ready to go and help. But this isn't the first time the Texas Military Department has supported flood response operations in Texas, nor will it be the last. As we head into what is expected to be another spring of heavy rainfall, I can't help but recall the many disasters the Texas Military Department responded to in 2015.

Last year's numerous responses began with the historic rainfall and subsequent flooding across Texas in May and June. The selfless men and women of the Texas Military Department worked around the clock from mid-May through Memorial Day weekend and into June to support their neighbors in need. Over 370 citizen-soldiers conducted 54 missions and 132 rescues and evacuations in 30 locations around the state.

In October, guardsmen responded to multiple fires across Central Texas, saving nearly 200 homes in seven different locations. After six days of fighting fires, just when they thought they'd get a chance to go home, guardsmen transitioned from fire response to flood response, in less than 24 hours. Three large rainstorms and flooding resulted in 12 missions and 46 Texans rescued.

Finally, December brought snow and ice to the North Texas cities of Amarillo, Garland, Lubbock and Midland. Texas National guardsmen conducted 23 missions throughout North Texas and rescued 124 people.

Once again, the men and women of the Texas Military Department have proven that in the face of disaster, Texans can count on a swift response with our greatest asset, our citizen-guardsmen.

The Texas Military Department is made up of the Texas Army and Air National Guard and the Texas State Guard, who all work for the governor of Texas during domestic operations. The Texas Military Department, partnered with local, state and federal agencies respond to both natural and man-made disasters.

The Domestic Operations Task Force, of which I am the commanding general, has command and control over disaster responses within Texas. I am incredibly proud, humbled and honored, to work alongside the men and women of Texas Military Department. No matter what mother nature throws at us, we stand strong, as Texans ready to serve Texas. - **DISPATCH**

*A Texas Army National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk out of the Austin Army Aviation Facility helps fight wild fires threatening homes and property near Bastrop, Texas, Oct. 14, 2015.
(U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Malcolm McClendon).*



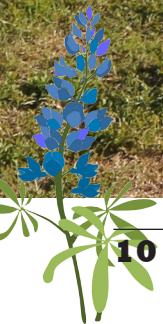
**“ IN THE FACE OF DISASTER, TEXANS CAN
COUNT ON A SWIFT RESPONSE WITH OUR
GREATEST ASSET, OUR CITIZEN-GUARDSMEN. ”**

Brig. Gen. Patrick Hamilton



NEW BEGINNINGS

A new facility for borderline teens brings new hope





***Story by Sgt. 1st Class Michael Leslie
Texas Joint Counter Drug Public Affairs***

EAGLE LAKE, Texas— The Texas ChalleNGe Academy has been changing lives and helping at risk youth get back on their feet since 1994.

The program started in Galveston, and was called the Seaborne Conservation Corps; however following the effects of Hurricane Ike in 2008, the school was forced to relocate. The program moved to Sheffield, halfway between El Paso and Austin and had so much success that Texas lawmakers authorized an additional site in Eagle Lake, about 40 miles southwest of Houston.

Opening its doors July 2015, the first Eagle Lake class graduated in December 2015.

The Eagle Lake location, also known as TCA-E, is expected to double the statewide graduation rate and influence more Texas youth through a positive environment. Participants are all 16-18 year-old students who volunteer for the program.

“The addition of the second program site allows us to expand recruiting efforts and reach additional youth and give them the opportunity to get back on track with their education and life goals,” said Lauren Schulman, program director TCA-E.

Eagle Lake’s second class started Jan. 17, with the candidates hoping to become cadets when they complete the two-week acclimation phase and earn their uniforms.



After two weeks, students say they already see a difference in their lives.

“TCA is a great way to change your life, and it just takes that extra degree. Not 211, but 212,” said candidate Julisa Mejia of Pasadena, referring to the impact that one degree can make when boiling water, a reference TCA-E cadre use to help motivate candidates. “It may be hard, but always keep your head up.”

In addition to giving the cadets the opportunity to enhance their education, the program’s eight core components address the needs of each youth, from leadership and community service, to life and job skills and physical fitness.

“Cadets have the opportunity to earn credits towards a high school diploma, and test for the GED, as well as gain the self-discipline to re-engage in age-appropriate activities, such as attending school and school-related activities,” Schulman said. “Additionally, cadets participate in service to the community and gain an understanding of what it means to be a vested member of their communities. These benefits, along with countless others, not only impact the cadets, but also their families, communities and Texas as a whole.”

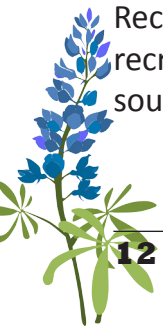
Because it is a voluntary program, applicants understand that this is what they need.

“TCA has given me a great opportunity to get my life back on track,” said candidate Bianca Robles of Weatherford. “Since the past year I had been going in the wrong direction, and I honestly needed TCA to put me back into the correct path.”

Recruiting applicants is a Texas-sized task, but TCA recruiters get much needed help from various sources, including graduates.

Texas Challenge Academy Cadet recognized during March awards ceremony.

(Courtesy Photo: Texas Challenge Academy East)



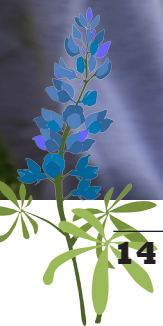


**“Always keep your
head up”**





“ It may be a hard path to change your life around, but anyone can do it. Everyone is worth it. ”





“TCA recruits across the entire state of Texas,” said Schulman. “Some applicants are referred by their school counselor, some by a friend that has attended TCA and others find out about the program from our website.”

The admissions and screening process includes informational briefings, completing an application packet, one-on-one interviews and a four hour orientation. This helps to ensure that applicants, mentors, staff and cadre, with parents’ support, can succeed during the nearly six month resident portion, and 12-month post-graduation mentor requirements, as well as further into their future.

“Just as each candidate joined TCA at a different point in his or her life, they leave with different goals,” Schulman said. “Many will return to their home high school and graduate with their cohort, some will continue their education at a vocational school or community college, an equal number will join the workforce and a few will join the military.”

Nested under the Texas Military Department’s Domestic Operations Joint Counterdrug Task Force, the Eagle Lake and Sheffield challenge programs are just two of many sites located across the nation.

“Texas ChalleNGe Academy, along with 34 other Youth ChalleNGe Programs nationwide, is 75 percent federally funded and 25 percent state funded,” Schulman said. “We are fortunate enough to have a state that is willing to support two Youth ChalleNGe Programs.”

More than 250 Texas youth started with the current class and are trying to make a change they haven’t been able to find elsewhere.

“A chance to make your life better is a chance everyone should take,” said Candidate Brittany Alford of Odessa. “It may be a hard path to change your life around, but anyone can do it. Everyone is worth it.”

- DISPATCH



TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT 2015 BY THE NUMBERS

STATE ACTIVE DUTY DEPLOYMENTS

74

RESULTING
IN

114

DURING

7

STATE OF TEXAS
ASSISTANCE REQUESTS

TEXAS STATE ACTIVE
DUTY MISSIONS

STATE ACTIVE DUTY
OPERATIONS



243
PEOPLE
RESCUED



76
PEOPLE
ASSISTED

TEXAS
COMMUNITIES
SERVED



21
ANIMALS RESCUED



756
GUARDSMEN DEPLOYED
IN TEXAS



STATE ACTIVE DUTY MISSIONS BY EQUIPMENT USED

114 
HUMVEES

 **108**
HIGH PROFILE VEHICLES

11 
WRECKERS

11 DUMP TRUCKS

4 FUELER VEHICLES

2 FRONT LINE AMBULANCES

 **20**
**UH-60
BLACKHAWKS**

9 
UH-72 LAKOTAS

 **22**
CH-47 CHINOOKS

289 TOTAL FLIGHT HOURS

21 HOIST RESCUES

1,621 BUCKETS DROPPED

1.7 MILLION GALLONS DROPPED



TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL

DEPLOYMENTS OUTSIDE CONTIGUOUS UNITED STATES

817

**TEXAS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD
SOLDIERS DEPLOYING**

256

**TEXAS AIR NATIONAL GUARD
AIRMEN DEPLOYING**

18,695

**ARMY GUARD
MEMBERSHIP**

3,224

**AIR GUARD
MEMBERSHIP**

1,788

**STATE GUARD
MEMBERSHIP**

3,479

**FULLTIME MILITARY
SUPPORT STAFF**

470

**MCA FUNDED STATE
SUPPORT STAFF**

61

**GR FUNDED STATE
SUPPORT STAFF**

MASTER COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

FEDERAL AGREEMENT FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF NATIONAL GUARD TRAINING FOR FEDERAL MISSIONS

\$58,118,100

TOTAL FEDERAL REIMBURSEMENT

\$4,896,750

STATE FUNDS MATCHING FEDERAL FUNDS

\$19,072,200

REIMBURSEMENT FOR STATE SALARIES



INSTALLATION RESOURCES

COUNSELING/MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM:

State funded program that provided over 8,700 counseling and consultation services to military service members, veterans and families on a variety of mental/behavioral health issues.

FAMILY ASSISTANCE SERVICES

Provide assistance in six essential services: Crisis Intervention, Legal Resources, Financial Resources, TRICARE Information, ID Cards and DEERS, Community Resources. Over 6,200 retired service members utilized the ID Card office in 2015

FAMILY READINESS:

Trains volunteers to support soldiers and families within a unit.

YOUTH PROGRAMS:

Support military children emotionally, socially and academically through engaging events designed to enhance leadership and teamwork.

TRANSITION ASSISTANCE:

Assist service members in accessing VA benefits and healthcare services, along with other federal, state, and community resources.

YELLOW RIBBON REINTEGRATION PROGRAM:

Prepare, sustain and reintegrate service members and families throughout the deployment cycle.

RESILIENCE TRAINING:

Teaches soldiers and families methods of preventing stress and enhancing coping mechanisms.

SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM:

Teaches awareness of person at risk concerns, caregiver tasks and intervention skills.

JOB CONNECTION EDUCATION PROGRAM:

Helps unemployed/underemployed service members develop the skills needed to enter the workforce and foster a career.

SURVIVOR OUTREACH SERVICES:

Help surviving family members cope with the loss of a service member and allow them to maintain a connection with their military family and support networks.

STATE TRAINING FACILITIES

57

READINESS CENTERS



48

FUNDED WITH 50/50 STATE/FEDERAL SPLIT

9

FUNDED WITH 25/75 STATE/FEDERAL SPLIT



5.9 MILLION SQ FEET OF ARMY NATIONAL GUARD BUILDING SPACE

6

ADDITIONAL JOINT READINESS CENTERS HOUSING BOTH GUARD & RESERVE COMPONENTS

3

ON FEDERAL LAND & RECEIVE 25/75 STATE/FEDERAL FUNDING SPLIT

3

ON STATE LAND AND RECEIVE 50/50 STATE/FEDERAL FUNDING SPLIT

9



FY 16-17 STATE OF TEXAS ARMORY RESTORATION 13% COMPLETED



Brig. Gen. Tracy R. Norris, Assistant Deputy Adjutant General - Army, gets pinned by her mother, Linda Norris Baker and Maj. Gen. John F. Nichols, the adjutant general of Texas, at a ceremony held at Camp Mabry in Austin, Texas, March 11, 2016. (US Army National Guard Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Malcolm McClendon).

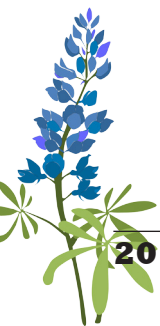
Texas Promotes New Assistant Deputy Adjutant General - Army

AUSTIN, Texas –Texas Army National Guard Brig. Gen. Tracy R. Norris was recently appointed to be the assistant deputy adjutant general-Army.

Norris thanked her friends and family for their continued support and mentorship over the years, as well as, the command group for their trust and confidence at this new level during her promotion ceremony to brigadier general at Camp Mabry, in Austin, March 11, 2016.

“I am honored and humbled to be given this opportunity and am thankful to each and every mentor who has given me guidance, leadership and pep talks over the years,” Norris said. “I look forward to the new challenges that lie ahead.”

Norris received an Army ROTC scholarship and began her military career in 1984 after graduating from Florida State University with a bachelor of science in anthropology. Since she has served the Army National Guard in four different states, to include Georgia, Florida, Massachusetts and Texas, as well as at the National Guard Bureau in Washington, D.C.





“I look forward to the new challenges that lie ahead.”

- Brig. Gen. Tracy R. Norris -

In her most recent assignment, Norris served as the director of the Construction and Facilities Management Office for the Texas Army National Guard and the battalion commander of the 176th Engineer Brigade. Prior to these positions, she served as commander of the Recruiting and Retention Battalion and worked as a program manager for several programs at the National Guard Bureau.

Norris' awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters, the Iraqi Campaign Medal with two Bronze Stars, Global War of Terrorism Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the U.S. Department of State Franklin Award and the Texas Lone Star Distinguished Service Medal.

In addition to a bachelor's degree, Norris holds a master of science in urban and regional planning from Florida State University, a master of strategic studies from the U.S. Army War College and a master of business administration from the University of Texas at Austin. Her civic affiliations include the Army Engineer Association, the National Guard Association of the United States and Texas, as well as the Veterans of Foreign Wars. - **DISPATCH**



Brig. Gen. Tracy R. Norris, assistant deputy adjutant general - Army, address family, friends and guests at her pinning ceremony held at Camp Mabry in Austin, Texas, March 11, 2016. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Malcolm McClendon).



RUNNING WITH THE WOLFPACK

*Story By Capt. Martha Nigrelle,
Public Affairs Officer, Texas Military Department*

AUSTIN, Texas — Master Sgt. Andrew Marmolejo has been a recruiter for the Texas Army National Guard for ten years; it's a mission he believes in.

"It's all about being able to help people," said Marmolejo, "taking a 17-year-old kid, seeing him transition and being able to help him change his life."

Marmolejo is the noncommissioned officer in charge of Texas Army National Guard's Recruiting and Retention Battalion's Recruiting Team 13 or Team Wolfpack.

The Wolfpack's territory runs through Austin and into surrounding counties. From this area Marmolejo's team is expected to recruit 96 soldiers in 2016. With 75 enlistments already processed, Marmolejo expects to reach their goal by May. Most would be ready to rest, but Marmolejo says they will stay busy.

"We will continue to recruit and we will help with retention and transition," he said.

The Recruiting and Retention Battalion mission is three-fold, said Lt. Col. August Murray, Recruiting and Retention Battalion commander, recruit the right people for the job, retain the best people for the job and to prevent losses.

"What we do is of critical importance to our organization and our state," said Murray. "It is vital that our communities and our units have all the soldiers they need when called upon to accomplish a mission."





To better prepare recruits for their transition into the military and help promote success, the National Guard developed the Recruitment Sustainment Program, a program designed to introduce new service members to the military environment, and to ease their adjustment to basic training.

From the time they join the National Guard, recruits begin training monthly with their recruiters and other new enlistees to practice basic military skills that will help them succeed at



Master Sgt. Miguel Fabbiani, a recruiter with the Recruiting and Retention Battalion, Texas Army National Guard, demonstrates assembly and disassembly of the M4 Carbine to Recruit Sustainment Program Soldiers at the 2nd annual Strong Warrior Challenge at Camp Bowie in Brownwood, Texas, April 25, 2015. The challenge consists of land navigation, weapons disassembly and assembly, grenade throwing and MOUT skills. Strong Warrior is part of the Recruit Sustainment Program, which is designed to help prepare new recruits for Basic and Advanced Individual Trainings. (Stock U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Malcolm McClendon).

basic training and advanced individual training. Recruiters continue to mentor their recruits through this training and even bring them to their first drill with their Guard unit.

The extra time recruiters spend with RSP recruits, not only prepares them for basic training, but helps them to excel, said Marmolejo.

“This year we’ve had six Distinguished Honor Graduates,” he said.

Recruiting men and women to join the military can be difficult in some places, but historically, Texas has met and exceeded their recruiting goals, said Murray.

Demographics may play a part in this being that Texas is home to five of the 10 fastest growing cities, but Murray thinks it has more to do with the spirit of Texas.

“Texans are patriotic,” said Murray. “They are proud to serve Texas and the nation in the National Guard. We enjoy a lot of community and state support.”

Texas pride may help Marmolejo when recruiting, but his dedication to mentoring his team and his recruits is what sets him apart.

In 2009, Marmolejo recruited Diana Lopez, enlisting her into the Texas Army National Guard.

“I was skeptical at first, but he was very honest about what the National Guard was about,” said Lopez. “He encouraged me; the National Guard was so good for him.”

When Marmolejo found out Lopez wanted to obtain a master’s degree and become an officer, he helped her enroll in the Reserve Officer Training Corps program.

To offset the cost of her education Marmolejo helped Lopez apply for state tuition assistance, a unique benefit for Texas Guardsmen.

“He set up everything and guided me through the process,” said Lopez. “I just filled in the blanks.”

Marmolejo stayed in touch with Lopez, always available to provide military guidance as she navigated her way through her career in the National Guard.

A black helicopter, likely a UH-60 Black Hawk, is shown in flight against a clear blue sky. The helicopter is viewed from a low angle, emphasizing its size and power.

**“TO ME, JOINING THE MILITARY
SHOULD BE A FIRST RESORT, IT’S
A GREAT OPPORTUNITY.”**

Master Sgt. Andrew Marmolejo





Texas National Guardsmen in the Recruit Sustainment Program, Recruiting and Retention Battalion, Texas Army National Guard, participate in the 2nd annual Strong Warrior Challenge at Camp Bowie in Brownwood, Texas, April 25, 2015. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Malcolm McClendon).



When Lopez had to withdraw from the ROTC program due to a family issue, it was Marmolejo who reminded her of her goal to become an officer and helped her apply for Officer Candidate School.

“He came to my commissioning at the Capitol,” said Lopez. “He puts a lot of focus on leadership; he takes it very seriously.”

An important part of that leadership is teamwork.

“Either we are going to be great as a team, or we are going to be horrible, but we are a team,” said Marmolejo. “Team mentality – once ac-

cepted, it drives big numbers, because everyone wants to be a part of it.”

Marmolejo credits his team for their dedication to the job, recounting how many times a member of his team has called late at night, with a question.

“They are very hardworking,” said Marmolejo. “And they are truly a team. You would think they were a family as close as they are to each other.”

Whether it’s working with the recruiters on his team or mentoring new recruits, working to build and sustain quality service members for the Texas Army National Guard is a job he is committed to for the organization he loves.

“To me, joining the military should be a first resort,” said Marmolejo. “It’s a great opportunity.” - **DISPATCH**

◀ *Recruiting and Retention Battalion, Texas Army National Guard, pulls security in preparation for the CH-47 Chinook landing at the 2nd annual Strong Warrior Challenge at Camp Bowie in Brownwood, Texas. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Malcolm McClendon).*





SEEKING SHELTER

*Story By Capt. Maria Mengrone,
Public Affairs Officer, 176th Engineer Brigade*

BEAUMONT, Texas – The Texas State Guard, assisted in establishing safe shelters for evacuated flood victims in the southeastern region of the state, March 14-21, 2016.

“We have a total of 18 soldiers from the State Guard here to supplement the Red Cross in any way they need us. They run the shelter, and we support their efforts,” said Sgt. Christopher T. Riehle, “We train closely with the Red Cross and other agencies to make sure we are prepared for something like this.”

The Texas State Guard trains annually to remain proficient in the duties they perform while called upon during disaster relief missions. Some of the emergency response training includes shelter management, search and rescue, emergency communications, mass care and medical support.

“We assist with setting up the shelter, but it could be anything from moving tables to providing security or just talking to the clients that are here,” said Staff Sgt. Nick B. Martinez, 2nd Battalion, 8th Regiment. “Just being able to help is a great reward.”

Guardsmen ran 24-hour operations at the shelter to ensure anyone in need was equipped with immediate support.

“At our peak we had about 170 clients that needed our help,” said shelter manager Marie Killingsworth, American Red Cross volunteer. “The soldiers have been here since the beginning. I love that they are so flexible, and can move at the drop of a dime.”

The Texas State Guard assisted with supporting three other safety shelters, two of which were evacuated due to flood concerns and consolidated in Beaumont.

“ The best part is when the clients thank us for being here because they know they’re gonna get the help that they need. ”

- Sgt. Christopher T. Riehle -

“This is now the fourth shelter we have been a part of and we are fully trained to do what it takes to help,” said Riehle. “The best part is when the clients thank us for being here because they know they’re gonna get the help that they need.”

The Texas Military Department activated more than 150 service members from the Texas Army and air National Guards and the Texas State Guard during severe flooding in Orange, Newton and Jasper counties. They provided swift water rescue support to emergency first responders, rescuing and evacuating 410 people from the floods, and supported shelter operations, providing basic necessities to hundreds of people. - **DISPATCH**

◀ *Sgt. 1st Class Chris Skinner, 2nd Battalion, 8th Regiment, Texas State Guard walks alongside a flood victim, at a safe shelter in Beaumont, Texas established by the American Red Cross, March 18, 2016. The TXSG mobilized, in support of civil authorities, to assist evacuated flood victims in the southeastern region of the state, 14-21 March 2016.
(U.S. Army National Guard photo by Capt. Maria Mengrone/Released)*



OUR FORCE

Pfc. Kyle R. Taylor,

**Combat engineer, 840th Mobile
Augmentation Company, 111th
Engineer Battalion, 176th
Engineer Brigade**

WHY DO YOU SERVE?

"I serve for reasons like this, helping people during this flood. This is my third DSCA mission and each one helps me appreciate wearing the uniform a little bit more. The look you get from the people when you roll into town is cool. They see you in your vehicles and they know you're going to help them. They smile at us and give us thumbs up. The people we help have had a bad day already and they see us rolling up and that's what makes it worth serving."*

***PHOTO AND QUESTION TAKEN DURING THE MARCH 2016 FLOODS**



TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT VALUES

DUTY

BEAR TRUE FAITH & ALLEGIANCE TO THE STATE AND NATION.
CULTIVATE AN ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL TO EXCEL. PREPARE MENTALLY,
PHYSICALLY & SPIRITUALLY TO DEPLOY AT HOME & ABROAD.
BE READY WHEN CALLED

HONOR

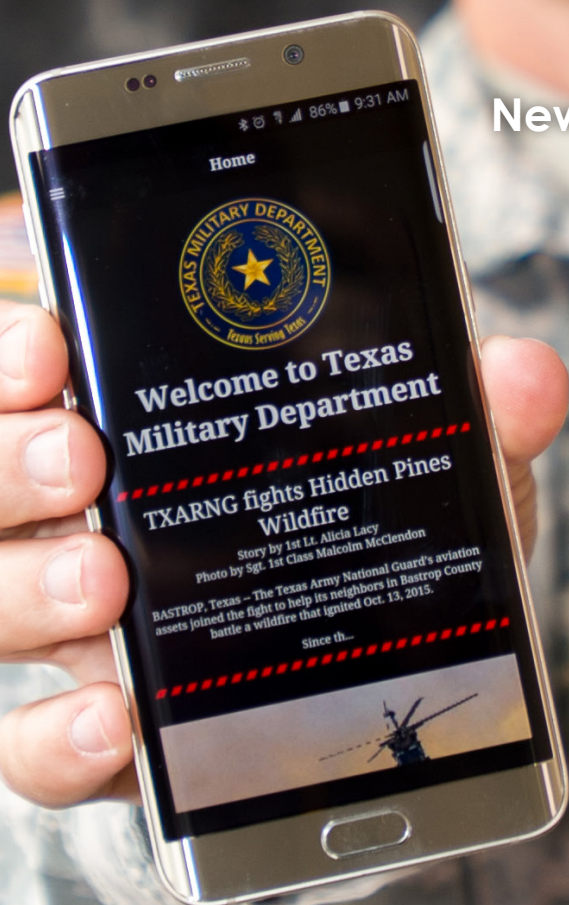
HOLD THE PUBLIC TRUST IN THE HIGHEST REGARD, EXCEED STANDARDS &
EXPECTATIONS. ACT WITH UNDERSTANDING, INNOVATION, RESOURCEFULNESS,
FLEXIBILITY & URGENCY. DO ALL YOU CAN, WHERE YOU ARE, WITH WHAT YOU HAVE
& ALWAYS PLACE THE WELFARE OF THOSE YOU LEAD FIRST.

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